

RECRUITING IN AMERICA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE GLOBE.

SIR,—As a good deal has been said of late in the English Papers about the attempt made by her Majesty's Government to draw foreign troops from the American continent, through the British Provinces, and as the question does not appear to be very well understood, I crave your indulgence while I attempt to give to your readers accurate and clearer ideas on this subject. It is one of considerable importance, and while I quite agree with you, that it would be unwise to disturb, by any unwarrantable exercise of the rights and advantages we possess, the internal economy or neutrality laws of the United States, I do not think that we ought to yield to clamour a source of supply to our armies, and which, if prudently worked, may add to our effective force two or three regiments every year.

The surplus population of Europe overflows into the American continent annually in large numbers. A considerable portion of this surplus goes to the British Provinces, by far the larger portion to the United States. This migration includes Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Swiss, Poles, Hungarians, Italians, Holsteinmen, and French, German, English, Irish, and Scotch in large numbers. Of the foreign population, a great proportion have seen service. Many of them have seen a good deal, and among them are many gallant and accomplished officers, some of high rank and noble blood, driven out by the revolutionary changes in Europe, and reduced to servile employments and uncongenial associations in the United States. These would gladly regain higher social positions, and fight under the banners of the Allies. From this portion of the emigrant population, the Government of the United States recruits its army, and obtains accomplished professors for its military schools, and swordsmen to train its youth at the principal Universities. From this portion it is that any daring adventurer, who desires to disturb the peace of neighbouring States or Provinces, draws largely the reckless material for a Filibustering expedition.

Now the question for England and France especially to consider, for all European Governments to examine fairly, is this—are the ties of nationality and country so completely forfeited by the mere passage of their subjects into a foreign State, that they cannot, in cases of emergency, be withdrawn by the ordinary inducements by which all armies are recruited—provided that this can be done without force, or disturbance, but by the circulation of information through the regular channels, and by the payment of the travelling expenses of those who desire to return to their allegiance, or to immigrate peacefully, and serve under their old banners in the civilized armies of Europe?

This question, having been raised, should be decided, not by the clamour made in the United States newspapers, but by calm investigation and fair discussion in the diplomatic circles of Europe, after it shall have been sifted to some extent by the press of the two great countries most deeply concerned.

The European side of this question was argued last spring, in a letter addressed to the "People of the United States," under the signature of a "British American." Though there has been a great deal of clamour since, and all sorts of attempts to strain the neutrality laws beyond their fair construction, I have never seen the doctrines laid down by this writer successfully controverted.

After explaining and vindicating the conduct of the British Government in passing the Foreign Enlistment Act, and of Sir Gaspard le Marchant in obeying his instructions, and opening a depot for the enlistment of soldiers at Halifax, within the limits of Her Majesty's dominions, the writer says :—

"Now I think it will puzzle the most ardent enemy of Great Britain, the most jealous stickler for the honour and peaceful relations of this country, to find fault with any thing done by the British Government or by the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia.

"So far, it will be perceived that neither has done any thing which it was not right to do, nor any act beyond the boundaries of the British Empire. When advertisements are published in this country for recruits for the American army, who questions the right of your officers to issue them? Who complains if they find their way all over the world? Who stops to inquire to what nation the recruits belong? Who attempts to prevent persons wanting to enlist from leaving the British islands or provinces, or France, or Germany, to come here for that purpose? Who would think of preventing poor men, without arms, neither enlisted nor enrolled, but intending to take service abroad, from leaving Manchester for Liverpool, or Liverpool or Glasgow for the United States? I quite admit that it would be another matter, if any attempt were made to organize and arm men in the British dominions for shipment abroad, or for aggression or intrusion on a friendly Power. That would not be permitted in England, and I trust it never will be permitted again by the people of this country, although men, fully armed and organized, have sometimes most unaccountably been thrown across the frontier, without producing half the excitement in the United States that has been caused by the appearance of a single British American gentleman at a fashionable hotel in New York.

"So far I trust I have made it very plain that no violations of the laws of this country have been committed by Her Majesty's Government, or by the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia. Their acts have been legal, and constitutional, and in strict accordance with the friendly relations which subsist between two great nations, that can afford to respect each other, and each other's laws, whatever their by-gone differences may have been."

As respects the agencies employed within the Union up to that time, "the British American" offers this candid and rational explanation :—

"A number of letters had been sent in to the Imperial and Provincial authorities, from British officers, from Foreign officers, and from other gentlemen residing in this country, who either had seen or were desirous of seeing service. Some of these gentlemen not only stated their own desire to join a Foreign Legion, but expressed the opinion that great numbers of persons, fond of the excitement of military life, or thrown out of employment by the depressed state of commercial affairs in this country, would follow their example.

"These voluntary offers of service neither the British Government nor Sir Gaspard le Marchant invited. They were made by people living in this country, who supposed that their swords were their own, and that they had a right to go out of the United States as freely as they came into them; who were under the impression that, even before the passage of the Reciprocity Treaty, they might have gone into the British Provinces to enlist, with no more violation of the laws of this country than if they had gone to get a wife, to buy a barrel of mackerel, or a cargo of potatoes.

"If these impressions were natural on their parts, what more natural than that the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia should select a person, in whom he had confidence, to come into the United States to ascertain whether these offers of service were made in

good faith; whether the parties were gentlemen of good character, of capacity, and experience; and whether there was any foundation for their belief that a large number of the unemployed classes here were disposed to join the British army? Surely his Excellency had a right to do this, and the person so selected had a right to come. Let us hope that he has discharged his very delicate duties with the common sense and discretion of a gentleman."

Having vindicated the conduct of the Imperial and Provincial Governments, the writer proceeds to argue the main question—to show how clear is the right of the Allies to claim the aid, at least, of their own subjects—how ungenerous it would be to prevent the unemployed, or the ardent, from going peacefully out of the country, simply as emigrants, without arms or organization, to better their condition, or to gratify their love of military adventure. Though the extract is rather long, I trust that you may have room for it:—

"But let us look at this matter from another point of view. The profession of arms is an honourable profession, and has, since the earliest ages, presented to the young and active irresistible attractions. Again, the veteran soldier is rarely, after a certain period, content with any other mode of life. Shall it be said, then, that Republican America will deny to her own sons the right, if so disposed, to see a little of the world, and to win distinction in the civilized armies of Europe? Shall it be said that when an old soldier drifts, by the accidents of life, or with the storms of revolution, within the charmed circle of this republic, he must never serve even his own country again? That 'who enters here must shut out hope'—must give up ambition, allegiance, country, the pride of race, the noblest feelings of our nature? God forbid!

"Would you deny to a Frenchman the privilege of joining the gallant band who in the Crimea are illustrating the gaiety and valour of his nation? Would you restrain a Pole or a Hungarian from lifting his sword against the Northern Despot whose iron hand prostrated the liberties of his country? Again, I say, God forbid! I think more highly of the American character. I have more reliance upon the elasticity and freedom of your institutions.

"On the causes of the present war I do not wish to dwell—nor on its management, which we may assume to have been defective. But look at the magnificent battle of Alma—at the splendid charge of the Scotch Greys and Enniskillen Dragoons at Balaklava, who scattered the hordes of Russian cavalry like chaff before the wind. Look at the fight of Inkermann, where eight thousand noble fellows held their ground for half a day against an army of sixty thousand. Now, shall it be said that an Englishman who wishes to leave this country, to fill a vacant place among the Coldstream Guards, and keep up the reputation of that distinguished corps, who crossed their bayonets with the enemy eleven times in one battle, shall not go? Suppose that an Irishman sees a vacant saddle in the Enniskillens, and thinks that he might as well fill it for the rest of his life, with good pay and rations, as to be sweeping the streets of New York—shall he not go? Suppose that a Scotchman, dreaming of that thin line of Highland warriors, who won the admiration of the world at Balaklava, dreams also that he might, if he had the chance, swell the ranks of that fine regiment, and perhaps emulate the example of their leader, Sir Colin Campbell, himself a poor widow's son—shall he not go? Shall not a British American, if he desires to do so, cross the frontier into his own province, or take passage in one of his own vessels, without being called upon to declare whether he does not intend to enlist when he gets home?

"But above all—shall French, or German, or Holstein gentlemen—shall the gentlemen of Hungary and Poland, thrown out of their true position by the convulsions

of Europe, be condemned for ever to teach music, or fencing, or dancing, for a livelihood, when honourable service is offered to them in the professions to which they were bred—when their rank as officers, and the social distinctions to which they have been accustomed, are again within their reach? Shall these gentlemen not be free to go into Nova Scotia, if so disposed? And if they do, and many of them have gone, who can prevent their countrymen, who have fought under their banners, and have confidence in their leaderships, from following their example?

"Surely, surely, it has not come to this—that the United States are to be converted into a great eel-pot, that lets every body in but nobody out. That a ring fence is to be made round Uncle Sam's farm, so contrived that though all the produce of the farm can go abroad, the labourers cannot. All this is too ridiculous to be supposed possible, and yet some people are sanguine enough to hope that it will turn out to be true.

"I do not believe it; I have too high an opinion of the intelligence and common-sense of the American people—too much reliance upon the free spirit which pervades their institutions, to believe this possible. Let the question be fairly stated in any drawing-room in Boston, New York, or Philadelphia, and every American lady would say—'Let them go!' State it fairly to the Democracy of any large city of the Union, in their wildest moment of excitement, and the people would say, 'Let them go.' Put the question to any gallant regiment of riflemen in Kentucky or Tennessee, and I much mistake the characters of the men if the answer would not be—'Let them go!'"

Along the frontier line of the British Provinces, where there are convenient barracks and arsenals, depots may be formed, towards which the more adventurous spirits to be found in this British and foreign population, may be steadily drawn, by good management, without any infraction of the neutrality laws of the United States. A transport arrived at Portsmouth the other day with 350 men for the *London Legion*, most of them old Soldiers, well officered and ready to take the field. Two hundred more are now at Halifax, ready to embark, and I learn that "Sir George *Stuart* has all the troops in that garrison under canvas, killing their own meat and baking their own bread," employments quite as indispensable, by the way, as the eternal parade movements, in full dress, to the sound of martial music.

Here, then, are the materials for a regiment collected in a few months, in spite of clamour, ignorance, and Russian spies, and devilish agencies of all sorts. What is to prevent us from collecting a fine regiment every few months? Can we not at least supply the garrisons of British America and of the West Indies from this source, without sending men at an enormous cost across the sea? But may we not, if this war goes on, draw men enough in this way through, if not from British America, to turn perhaps the scale in some bloody encounter with the hordes to which our army is now opposed? This is a question of some importance, involving rights of some value. Trusting that I have stated it fairly, I have the honour to be your obedient servant,

JOSEPH HOWE,

London, 31 Aug. 1855.

*London Legion
Stated in London Globe*